

**EIA-Funded Program Name:**

**\* Current Fiscal Year EIA Allocation to this EIA-Program:**

**\* Name of Person Completing Survey and to whom EOC members may request additional information:**

**\* Telephone number:**

**\* E-mail:**

**History of the program. Please mark the appropriate response (choose one):**This program:

Was an original initiative of the Education Improvement Act of 1984

Was created or implemented as part of the Education Accountability Act of 1998

Has been operational for less than five years

Was funded by last fiscal year by general or other funds.

Is a new program implemented for the first time in the current fiscal year

Other

**What SC laws, including provisos in the current year's general appropriation act, govern the implementation of this program? Provide complete citations from the SC Code of Laws including Title, Chapter, and Section numbers.**

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**Code of Laws:(MAX. 100 characters)**

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**Proviso Number:(MAX: 100 characters)**

IA. 22

**What South Carolina regulations govern the implementation of this program? Provide specific references to the South Carolina Code of Regulations?**

**Regulations:**

Not applicable.

**Do guidelines that have been approved by the State Board of Education, the Commission on higher Education or other governing board exist that govern the implementation of this program?**

Yes

No

**What are the primary objective(s) or goals of this program? Please distinguish between the long-term mission of the program and the current annual objectives of the program. (The goals or objectives should be in terms that can be quantified, evaluated and assessed.) (MAX 3500 characters)**

Not applicable. The research services provided by the South Carolina Educational Policy Center are determined each year in collaboration with staff from the EOC and the Department of Education.

**In the prior fiscal year, what primary program activities or processes were conducted to facilitate the program's performance in reaching the objective(s) as provided in question 7? What, if any, change in processes or activities are planned for the current fiscal year? (Examples of program processes would be: training provided, recruiting efforts made, technical assistance services, monitoring services, etc. Answers should be specific to the process undertaken at the state level to support the objectives of the program and should be quantifiable Please include any professional development services provided.)(MAX: 5000 characters)**

In the prior fiscal year, the South Carolina Policy Center (SCEPC) studied the characteristics of 32 schools designated as gap-closing schools based upon a 4-year history of high performance by historically underachieving students at the identified schools. The study analyzed report card indicators and school climate survey data gathered from students, parents, and teachers for gap-closing elementary schools and other schools in an effort to ascertain how the two groups of schools differed. The analyses included contextual measures and outcome measures aggregated at the school-level for the 2004-2005 school year. The resulting dataset included more than 500 schools with exit grades of four, five, or six and 26 of the gap-closing schools with the same grade organizations.

The SCEPC is continuing to study the relationship between school climate and student achievement in the current fiscal year. School climate data from 2006 is being analyzed for all schools in the state. Relationships between school climate variables and outcome variables such as student achievement, dropout rates, student/teacher attendance, suspensions/expulsions, etc. will be investigated in addition to an examination of school climate in low-performing schools.

**In the prior fiscal year and using the most recent data available, what were the direct products and services (outputs) delivered by this program? (Examples of program outputs would be: number of teachers attending professional development seminars, number of AP exams given and students taking AP classes, number of students served in the program, etc.)(MAX: 5000 characters)**

SCEPC conducted research on gap-closing schools in South Carolina.

**What are the outcomes or results of this program? (Program outcomes can be both quantitative and qualitative and should address the program's objectives. Please use the most recent data available. Examples of outcomes would be: results of surveys, test data, increase in minority participation, reduction in achievement gaps, teacher loans awarded, textbooks purchased, etc.)(MAX: 5000 characters)**

SCEPC's 2006-2007 analyses of gap-closing elementary schools found that the gap-closing schools tended to serve more middle-income students, more gifted students, and fewer overage students. The gap-closing schools were not uniform on these measures, however, and three of the 26 gap-closing schools actually had poverty indexes higher than 70%, the average for the 500 schools included in the study.

The study found systematic differences between gap-closing and all other schools on key climate-culture indicators measured by the surveys. Teachers in gap-closing schools expressed more favorable opinions of the schools, especially in the area of home-school relationships. For the item "I am satisfied with the home-school relations," for example, 96% of the teachers in gap-closing schools, versus 79% of teachers in other schools, agreed. For the item "Parents participate as volunteer helpers in the school or classroom," the values were 94% and 71% - a 23 percentage point discrepancy favoring gap-closing schools. Teachers in the gap-closing schools were also more likely than the teachers in other schools to view teacher and staff morale as positive.

Students in gap-closing schools were more satisfied with the social-physical environment than were students in the other schools. There was a discrepancy of 15 percentage points for the item "Students at my school behave well in class," and 13 percentage points on the items "The bathrooms at my school are kept clean." Five of the six items measuring social-physical environment had double digit differences favoring gap-closing schools.

Parent survey differences, though less striking than for students and teachers, indicated that parents in gap-closing schools tended to be more active in the schools as volunteers, to indicate that teachers contacted them regarding their child more often, and to rate the schools higher for their efforts to engage parents. They saw fewer obstacles, like transportation, to their active participation. Parents of children in gap-closing schools also tended to view students as better behaved.

The study also found that achievement indicators were more positive in gap-closing schools than in the other schools in the analyses. For example, 38% of gap-closing schools had excellent absolute ratings on their report cards but only 9% of all other schools did so. Conversely, while none of the gap-closers had below average or unsatisfactory absolute ratings, 20% of other schools received these ratings.

Similarly, more AYP objectives were met by schools with the most favorable school climates. Schools with more positive climates met 84.4% of their AYP objectives, while schools with the lowest climate ratings met only 31% of their AYP objectives. The relationship between student PACT performance and school climate followed a similar pattern. Student achievement was higher in schools with more positive climate, and students' performance was lowest in schools with the least favorable climate ratings. The gap-closing schools were included in the groups of schools with the most positive school climate.

The results of this study of gap-closing schools are consistent with other research, particularly the recent school climate research from the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR). CCSR used information from principals, teachers, and students from over 200 schools to identify crucial factors supporting school improvement. These factors were leadership, professional capacity, parent-community ties, climate, and instruction. They also discovered that schools with high levels of trust at the beginning of reform efforts had a 1 in 2 chance of making significant improvements in reading and math achievement, while schools with low levels of trust had a 1 in 7 chance of making achievement gains. The findings from Chicago are consistent with those from the present study in illustrating that climate factors are potentially changeable and



## Program Evaluations

**What was the date of the last external or internal evaluation of this program?**

**Has an evaluation been conducted?**

Yes    No

**If an evaluation was conducted, what were the results and primary recommendations of the evaluation?  
(MAX: 2000 characters)**

Not applicable.

**Can you provide a URL link, electronic version or hard copy of this evaluation to the Education Oversight Committee?**

Yes

No

**If no, why not?(MAX: 100 characters)**

Not applicable.

**The following questions do NOT apply to programs having a program code beginning with 01. (These are programs administered by or through the Department of Education. The Office of Finance at the Department of Education will provide answers to these questions.) If your program code begins with 01, please hit the NEXT button below. Once you advance to the next page, hit the SUBMIT button.**

Please mark the appropriate response:

**The total amount of EIA funds requested for this program for the next fiscal year will be:**

The same as appropriated in the current fiscal year's appropriation

An increase over the current fiscal year's appropriation

A decrease over the current fiscal year's appropriation

**If you indicated an increase or decrease in funding for the next fiscal year, what is the total amount requested for this program for the next fiscal year?**

**If you indicated an increase or decrease, please describe the reasons for the increase or decrease. How will the increase or decrease impact the objectives of the program as answered in question 7?(MAX: 3500 characters)**

SCEPC provides research services in collaboration with the EOC and the Department of Education. The SCEPC would welcome the opportunity to continue the collaborative work of this project.

**Please fill in the attached charts to reflect the budget for this program in the prior fiscal year and the budget for this program in the current fiscal year.**

Funding Source	Prior FY Actual	Current FY Estimated
EIA		
General Fund		
Lottery		
Fees		
Other Sources		
Grant		
Contributions, Foundation		
Other (Specify)		
Carry Forward from Prior Yr		
<b>TOTAL</b>		

Expenditures	Prior FY Actual	Current FY Estimated
Personal Service		
Contractual Services		
Supplies and Materials		
Fixed Charges		
Travel		
Equipment		
Employer Contributions		
Allocations to Districts/Schools/Agencies/Entities		
Other: Please explain		
Balance Remaining		
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>#FTES</b>		

Data entry complete for this year.

**Will additional information (eg. charts, tables, graphs, etc.) be submitted under separate cover to EOC for this program? If so, submit to Melanie Barton at [mbarton@eoc.sc.gov](mailto:mbarton@eoc.sc.gov). The program number should be cited in the subject of the e-mail.**

Yes      No